



## **Only in Seattle Initiative RFP Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q - Where can I find demographic data about my district?**

A – 2000 census data by neighborhood is available on DPD’s website:

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Research/Population\\_Demographics/Census\\_2000\\_Data/Data\\_Maps\\_for\\_Locally\\_Defined\\_Areas/DPDS\\_007017.asp](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Research/Population_Demographics/Census_2000_Data/Data_Maps_for_Locally_Defined_Areas/DPDS_007017.asp)

DPD has not compiled 2010 census data by neighborhood. Information about the data, links to the census website, and Seattle information that has been compiled are available here:

[http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Research/Population\\_Demographics/Overview/](http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Research/Population_Demographics/Overview/)

Impact Capital also has access to ESRI data, which includes census data, as well as other sources. To produce a report, you would need to set up an appointment with Impact Capital. This service is primarily available to organizations in the program and is provided year-round. Organizations who are not in the program may be able to access it but Impact Capital will have limited availability between now and the RFP deadline to pull the data for purposes of the RFP only.

### **Q - What is the Façade Improvement RFP and how does it relate to the OIS RFP?**

A - The Façade Improvement RFP is a separate opportunity that OED released shortly after the OIS RFP. While this is a separate RFP, a different funding source and a separate process, the deadline is the same. The façade RFP will also give preference to projects that are part of the goals and strategies in a current or proposed OIS action plan. Therefore, if you are planning to submit both an OIS RFP and a façade RFP, the façade improvements should be included in your action plan. The funds available for the façade RFP are from the Seattle Investment Fund, LLC – the City of Seattle’s New Market Tax Credit entity. The OIS RFP review committee will evaluate all façade proposals and make funding recommendations to the Seattle Investment Fund.

### **Q - The RFP mentions that federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are restricted to low-income neighborhoods. How do you determine which neighborhoods are eligible and if I am not in a low-income neighborhood, can I apply for funding?**

A - In general, CDBG funds need to be used in neighborhoods that are “primarily residential” and where at least 51% of people served are low or moderate income, based on federal income guidelines. However, there are many other eligibility options and requirements and every district must be reviewed individually to determine if and how CDBG funds can be used.



CDBG funds are a large portion of the funds available but not the only fund source. There are also city general funds that have different requirements and can be used in neighborhoods that are not low-moderate income.

If you think OIS is a good fit for your district, please consider submitting a proposal. It is our job to figure out how to use the funding to serve the top proposals.

**Q - How do I decide what tier to apply for? Will it reflect poorly on us, or will we be disqualified if we apply for the wrong tier?**

A - You will not be disqualified for applying for the “wrong” tier. Last year, many districts received funding or services within a different tier than the one for which they applied. For example, districts submitted a Tier I proposal, were not competitive at that level, but were a good fit for the OIS Marketing campaign. The applications for Tiers I and II require much more information and time to prepare than Tiers III and IV. The more information you provide, the more we learn about your district, your partners, and your vision and goals and the better we can determine how we might serve you.

**Q - Where can I get funding for an individual project or event in my district?**

A – The OIS Initiative replaced OED’s former Neighborhood Business District granting process. We therefore no longer provide grants to business districts outside of the OIS RFP process. The OIS RFP is also not focused on providing grants for single projects or events, without a broader action plan.

The Department of Neighborhoods continues to provide its Neighborhood Matching Fund grants, the Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs has a granting program, and there are other opportunities from the city as well, depending on your project. This new website has all a summary of many granting sources at the city. <http://www.seattle.gov/grants/>

**Q - How do you determine what is a neighborhood business district?**

A – A neighborhood business district should have a mixture of residents, businesses and others using the district such as employees or shoppers. In your proposal, you tell us about your business district – the geographic boundaries, the businesses, the people served, etc. The city has also created a few different ways of classifying neighborhoods districts such as the designated Urban Villages, neighborhood commercial zoning, etc. We look at all of the information as well as our own knowledge of the area.

**Q - If my district was in the program in 2011, do we need to submit a proposal each year?**

A – Yes. Granting remains competitive each year and all districts must submit a proposal to be in the program. For districts that received grants last year, there are a few differences in the information requested. The proposal instructions specify the different information requested for current and new grantees.



**Q – If we are interested in BIA Support (Tier IV) and Organizational Development Support (Tier III) in addition to a Tier I or Tier II application, should we submit separate requests or just one application**

A – One application should be submitted for the entire district. The Tier I and II applications include a question that allows you to request BIA support and Only in Seattle Marketing as part of your proposal. However, there is no question about the Tier III Organizational Development support within the Tier I or II applications. You can include a request for organizational development in your proposal if you are also interested in receiving these services.

**Q – Our community has created a vision/neighborhood plan/or other such planning process. This vision/plan is still relevant to our business district. Can we use this as our “Strategic Vision” or do we need to create a new one? Alternately, our business association/chamber has a mission statement. Is that an acceptable “Strategic Vision?”**

A – The Strategic Vision should be broadly shared, compelling and build on your district’s individual strengths. If there was a community process to develop a vision that continues to feel relevant to your stakeholders, that is probably a broadly shared vision. If you have reached out to all major stakeholders in the district and have agreed on the vision, this can also demonstrate that it is broadly shared.

The “Strategic” part of the vision is intended to make it specific to your district and be directly driving the strategies in your plan. The following example shows how the vision ties to specific strategies and planning processes. It is not very specific to the neighborhood, however.

The XYZ business district has a ***two-fold vision***:

First, we envision the business district as ***a pleasant and convenient one-stop shopping location for residents of the surrounding neighborhoods***. To this end, we recruit businesses that round out the district’s offerings, we promote sufficient density of businesses and residents to provide a “critical mass”, and we seek to promote shopping locally.

Secondly, we envision XYZ as ***a region-wide destination for dining, entertainment and the arts***. To this end, we promote our district regionally and try to make it as hospitable as possible for visitors.

This vision statement was developed at a day-long, facilitated assessment and visioning session in May 2003. The session was attended by a mix of business owners, property owners, and neighborhood activists. It is consistent with the 1999 Neighborhood Plan vision for the XYZ residential urban village as a vibrant, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented community that maintains its historic small-town scale. The business district vision has stood the test of time remarkably well, and it has provided important direction to the Business Association as well as to individual businesses and property owners.

Here is another example



ABC's vision is to support an economically vibrant, sustainable, and culturally diverse ABC Business District. Our goal is to support equitable development of the ABC area, to preserve diversity and affordability and create economic opportunities for businesses and residents in this changing area. Our vision is a holistic, long-term plan that includes organizing businesses and residents, developing the capacity and political capital of local businesses, creating economic development opportunities, and developing affordable commercial and residential projects within this neighborhood business district.

This vision grew out of several community/stakeholder processes over the last decade or more including the Neighborhood Planning process conducted by the City 1999, the Action Agenda of 2005, and through a number of stakeholder meetings ABC conducted three years ago with business and community leaders in the area. Most recently, the City's 2009 Neighborhood Plan Update process reconfirmed that this vision is supported by the larger community.

This vision is articulated at community planning and visioning processes and the BA posts it on their website, brochures and other promotional materials.